

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 17-22 and 25-34 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 17, 21 and 26 are amended, claims 30-34 are added and claims 23 and 24 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicants thank Examiner Barfield for recognizing allowable subject matter in claims 21 and 22. By this Amendment, claim 21 is rewritten in independent form including the base claim and any intervening claims. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claims 21 and 22 are allowable.

In the Office Action, the drawings were objected to as not showing the subject matter of claims 23 and 24. By this Amendment, claims 23 and 24 are cancelled and, therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the objection is moot and should be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, claims 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. By this Amendment, claims 23 and 24 are cancelled and, therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection is moot and should be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, claims 17-20 and 25-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,322,109 to Thebaud. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 17 includes the feature of each rib unit having at most one supporting member, the supporting member having first and second ends wherein the first end of the supporting member

of each rib unit is immediately adjacent to the first end of the supporting member of at least one other of the rib units, and the second end of the supporting member of each rib unit is closer to the second end of the supporting member of an adjacent one of the rib units than to the second end of the support member of any other one of the rib units.

In contrast, Thebaud does not disclose, or even suggest, this claimed relation of the ends of the supporting members. The alternating nature of the slats 12 of Thebaud result in a structure where a first end of each slat 12 is not immediately adjacent to a first end of any one of the other slats 12 while a second end of the same slat 12 is closer to the second end of an adjacent slat 12 than to a second end of any other slat 12.

For at least the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that Thebaud does not disclose each and every feature of claim 17 and, therefore, rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is inappropriate. As a result, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, claims 17, 18, 20 and 25-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,067,615 to Gehry. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 17 includes the feature of each rib unit having only one supporting member. In contrast, Gehry does not disclose, or even suggest, a furniture piece in which each rib unit has only one supporting member.

For at least the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that Gehry does not disclose each and every feature of claim 17 and, therefore, rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is inappropriate. As a result, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Appl. No. 09/560,686
Amdt. Dated March 5, 2004
Reply to Office Action of Nov. 5, 2003

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance is respectfully requested.

Should the examiner believe that anything further would place the application in even better condition for allowance, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 5, 2004

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